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ABSTRACT

In an effort to shift the focus of employment programs from unemployment to reemployment, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is funding the development and implementation of a one-stop employment system. The DOL has largely left states free to design their one-stop systems provided programs have these features: (1) universality, (2) customer choice orientation, (3) designed to operate as an integrated system, and (4) performance driven/outcome based. Federal guidelines also specify that one-stop programs provide customers with information about the full range of services related to finding employment, filing unemployment insurance claims, and accessing job training/education and assessment/counseling. As of February 1996, 54 states and jurisdictions had received one-stop system-building grants (including 16 implementation grants, 28 planning and development grants, and learning laboratory and system building project grants). The one-stop career centers that have been developed thus far reflect the national trend toward service integration as a strategy for implementing systemic change. Among the challenges facing developers/operators of one-stop career centers are the following: acquiring, installing, and operating the state-of-the-art technology required to function as information brokers; developing strategies for interagency collaboration and business involvement; and formulating strategies for assessing diverse training needs and sharing existing resources. Contains an annotated bibliography of 12 print resources and 2 resource organizations.) (MN)

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One-Stop Career Centers
Trends and Issues Alerts

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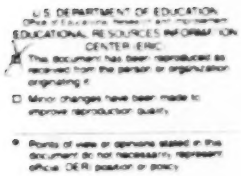

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TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS

by Susan Imel *1996*

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education

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One-Stop Career Centers

As a part of the efforts to design a national work force development system (Wills 1995), a one-stop employment system is being implemented with funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). Designed to merge traditional employment and training services, the one-stop program also includes features that will attract laid-off professionals and new work force entrants (Dykman 1995). The objective is to replace the "existing unemployment system with a re-employment system . . . [that will supplant] the image of the system as a safety net with that of a trampoline that will launch people into new careers" (Lee 1995, p. 32). The one-stop system has been constructed to address existing problems of fragmentation (i.e., the existence of dozens of different government programs that provide employment and training assistance), lack of collaboration among these agencies, and insufficient information and resources related to careers (Dykman 1995). Several of the policies that Wills (1995) identified as being among those advocated for a national system of work force development are associated with the one-stop program: (1) consolidating and eliminating programs, (2) providing customer choice and easy access to services, and (3) granting maximum authority and responsibility to states and local communities.

The USDOL has given states the freedom to design their one-stop systems with only a few guiding principles:

- **Universality**—Offer customers different kinds of help for finding jobs and developing careers
- **Customer Choice**—Offer options for where to get services
- **Integrated System**—Involve at least all the relevant employment and training agencies
- **Performance Driven/Outcome Based**—Come up with a system for evaluation (Dykman 1995, p. 35)

Federal program guidelines also specify that all one-stop customers must receive information about the full range of services related to employment, assistance with filing unemployment insurance claims, and information on job training and education, assessment of skills, and job counseling. In addition, one-stop career centers must serve as information brokers and make information and resources available to their customers that will enable them to engage in career exploration, identify job openings, develop job searches, and identify appropriate referral and placement services (ibid.).

As of February 1996, 54 states and jurisdictions had received one-stop system building grants. This number includes implementation grants in 16 states, planning and development grants in 28 states and the District of Columbia, and learning laboratory and system building project grants (USDOL March 1996; July 1996). Among the trends and issues identified by those states that have implemented one-stop career centers are the following:

- **Technology**. Used to support both information brokering activities and management information systems, technology is a cornerstone of the one-stop career center efforts. The USDOL's America's Job Bank (AJB), an electronic listing of job openings nationwide, demonstrates the importance of the role of technology. In February 1996, more than 4 million "visits" were made to the AJB World Wide Web site (http://www.ajb.dni.us) where over 365,000 jobs were listed (USDOL March 1996). In their role as information brokers, one-stop career centers must provide customers access to resources such as AJB as well as local labor market information. One of the challenges that one-stop career centers face is acquiring, installing, and operating the requisite state-of-the art equipment needed to support their activities.
- **Interagency Collaboration**. A basis of all one-stop career centers is collaboration among agencies that have traditionally provided employment and training services. Throughout the implementation states, educational agencies are an important part of the team effort. For example, in Mississippi, one-stop centers are located in community colleges (Honeycutt 1995-1996) and other states (e.g., Maryland and North Carolina) also have one-stop centers located in schools (Dykman 1995). With the emphasis on interagency collaboration comes issues of old cultures and turf that must be dealt with. The key is developing a one-stop center in which all partners are key players and that represents the best practices of the partner agencies (USDOL April 1996).
- **Business Involvement**. One of the challenges for the one-stop system is getting the respect and attention of the business community (Honeycutt 1995-1996). Although many employers have negative perceptions of public employment services, surveys have shown that they are eager to engage in work force development efforts, but they want a system that meets their needs. One-stop career centers must develop strong employer linkages by seeking information about employer needs and then requesting feedback on how those needs are being met.
- **Professional Development**. Because the one-stop career centers involve a merger of a number of different agencies and programs, staff training and development is a priority. According to Clinton Flowers of Missouri, "leadership training cannot be overemphasized, [because there are] too many agencies weaving in and out of the program" (USDOL April 1996, p. 2). Issues related to training and development include assessing the diverse training needs and identifying and sharing existing resources.

The one-stop career centers are representative of the national trend toward service integration as a strategy for implementing systemic change. Adult, career, and vocational educators all have a vital role to play in their development and implementation. Additional information about one-stop centers can be obtained by consulting the resources listed here.

Print Resources

Anderson, Richard T. ***"One-Stop" Shopping: An Integrated Service Delivery System for Job Seekers and Employers***. Pewaukee, WI: Waukesha County Workforce Development Center, January 1996. (ED 390 479)
Describes the Workforce Development Center (WDC) in Waukesha County, Wisconsin. A cooperative effort of nine public and private agencies, WDC provides integrated employment services to area citizens and employers. Services for job seekers include counseling, occupational assessment, education and training, employment search assistance, and child care. Employers are offered business development services, interview and meeting rooms, management training, and banking services.

Conger, D. Stuart et al. ***Career and Employment Counselling in Canada***. Edmonton, Alberta: Canadian Guidance and Counselling Association, 1994. (ED 375 336)
This report on the status of employment/career/vocational counseling services available to youth and adults through Employment and Immigration Canada, from community-based

groups, through the educational system, and from social services contains lessons for the United States. Among the issues identified were career and employment counseling's isolation from the mainstream of programs and services, professionalism and training, restructuring of career and employment counseling services, and those who need career and employment counseling.

Dykman, Ann. "One-Stop Shopping." ***Vocational Education Journal*** 70, no. 8 (November-December 1995): 34-38, 68.
One-stop career centers funded with Department of Labor grants in several states are highlighted in this article. Includes the rationale for establishing one-stop centers and basic design principles.

Honeycutt, Tony L. "'One Stop' Career Centers: Effective Partnerships between Education and Business/Industry." ***ATEA Journal*** 23, n. 2 (December 1995-January 1996): 14-16.
Mississippi's one-stop career centers are designed to transform the state's community colleges from feeder institutions for universities to institutions in touch with the local community and economy. Services of the one-stop centers are described.

Imel, Susan. ***For the Common Good: A Guide for Developing Local Interagency Linkage Teams. Revised Edition***. Columbus: Center on Education and Training for Employment, The Ohio State University, 1995. (ED 388 848)
Describes the process used in Ohio since 1990 to develop local interagency linkage teams. Includes a six-step process used to develop teams, an action plan form, resources for further information, and an overview of Ohio's teams, several of which are now involved in one-stop career centers.

Lee, Chris. "Out of the Maze: Can the Federal Job-Training Mess be Fixed?" ***Training*** 32, no. 2 (February 1995): 29-34, 36-37.
Reviews the status of federal initiatives to reform the U.S. employment and training systems, including one-stop career centers, skill standards, School-to-Work Opportunities Act.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, One-Stop Career Center Team. "Capacity Building in the One-Stop Environment." ***One-Stop/LMI.*** <http://esc.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/nr1stp.htm> (select "Madison One-Stop Conference Report") August 1995.
Based on a conference session held during the National One-Stop/LMI Implementation States Madison (WI) Conference designed to encourage states to share capacity building resources. Topics covered include skills needed by one-stop staff, identification of states and federal training for these skills, and insights from state experts. Concluded that capacity building did not seem to be a "burning issue" at this time.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, One-Stop Career Center Team. "Employers' Fears, Wants & Needs." ***One-Stop/LMI.*** <http://esc.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/nr1stp.htm> (select "Madison One-Stop Conference Report") August 1995.
During the National One-Stop/LMI Implementation States Madison Conference, representatives from the states of Connecticut, Maryland, and Massachusetts discussed their experiences with employer fears, wants, and needs related to one-stop career centers. Concluded that in their states a strong employer link exists; employers are eager to engage in the one-stop effort, not only in initial development but also in ongoing effort; and employer needs must be identified and met on a continuing basis.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, One-Stop Career Center Team. "One-Stop Career Center 'System Building'/America's Labor Market Information System: A March 1996 Update from the ETA." ***One-Stop/LMI.*** <http://esc.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/nr1stp.htm> (select "One-Stop Quarterly Reports") March 1996.
One of a continuing series of newsletters updating the employment and training community on the U.S. Department of Education's one-stop system building progress. This issue draws on the quarterly reports of grantees to examine progress and accomplishments in the one-stop implementation sites, summarize recent developments in a number of planning and development states, and provide snapshots of various activities underway in the Local Learning Laboratories.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, One-Stop Career Center Team. "One-Stop System Building Update, July 1996." ***One-Stop/LMI.*** <http://esc.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/nr1stp.htm> (select "One-Stop Quarterly Reports") July 1996.
Contains updates on one-stop career center activities, including implementation states, planning and development states, and Local Learning Laboratories.

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, One-Stop Career Center Team. "Panel Discussion on Lessons Learned." ***One-Stop/LMI.*** <http://esc.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/nr1stp.htm> (select "Louisville One-Stop Conference Report") April 1996.
Extracted from the National One-Stop Louisville Conference meeting notes, this document reports the results of a panel discussion. Panelists from three states—Arizona, North Carolina, and Missouri—reported on their experiences in developing one-stop career center state systems. Common issues and questions included the range of funds allocated to each area as well how funds could be spent, reporting and management information system requirements, and common intake system versus universal intake system.

Wills, Joan L. "Workforce Development: The Policy Debate." In ***Workplace Learning. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, No. 68***, edited by W. Franklin Spikes, pp. 17-37. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
Provides a work-in-progress definition of a work force development system and frames issues and questions for national and state policy makers on how to develop such as system. Also reviews the history of work force development efforts in the United States.

Other Resources

ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, 1900 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1090; 614/292-4353 or 800/848-4815, both ext. 4-7686. Fax: 614/292-1260. Internet: <wagner.6@osu.edu>. WWW: http://www.osu.edu/units/education/cete/ericacve/index.html>.

Training Technology Resource Center, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, N6511, Washington, DC 20201; 202/219-5600 or 800/488-0901. Fax 202/219-4858. Internet: telnet by setting terminal emulation to vt220 (7 bit) or vt100/102; the address is <ttrc.doleta.gov>. WWW: http://www.doleta.gov.

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